

## XX. PRELIMINARY NOTE ON A NEW TORTOISE FROM SOUTH INDIA.

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The tortoise which forms the subject of this note was obtained in Cochin State, on the Malabar coast, in October 1911, while I was engaged on a collecting tour in the dense State Forests, at a distance of about twenty miles from Chalakudi, the starting point of the forest tramway service. The Kadars, a jungle tribe who brought the first specimen to me, stated that it lived in the forest, inhabiting a short underground burrow and that it did not affect the neighbourhood of water, a fact borne out by the absence of webbed digits. In addition to this specimen, a male apparently mature, which is described below, I subsequently obtained through the kindness of Mr. G. R. Grubb, M.A., M.I.C.E., Chalakudi, a second young example, but a Museum collector dispatched to the forests in March last was unable to find any others, so the species does not appear to be common. *Testudo travancorica*, Boulenger, is common in the same neighbourhood and I obtained a number of specimens. Both examples of the new species have been kept alive for over six months, during which time they have lived entirely on vegetable food. They have not shown any special partiality for water and when handled they do not emit an offensive odour as in the case of *G. trijuga*.

I have followed Stejneger and Siebenrock in substituting the earlier name *Geoemyda* for *Nicoria*, the latter being adopted by Boulenger in the volume on Reptilia in the Fauna of India series. As pointed out by Stejneger (Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, XV, p. 237, 1902) the type of *Geoemyda* (Gray, 1834) is *G. spengleri*, and the same species was subsequently taken by Gray as the type of his genus *Nicoria* (1855).

### GEOEMYDA SILVATICA, n. sp.

Carapace moderately depressed, tricarinate, with the median keel much more prominent than the lateral ones; the greatest height at the level of the posterior margin of the first vertebral shield. Vertebral shields broader than long, except the last in which the length and breadth are almost equal; vertebrals, particularly the first, wider than the costals. Nuchal longer than broad. Plastron of moderate width. Abdominal shields larger than the pectorals. The longest median suture is that between the

abdominals, but the one between the pectorals is only slightly shorter; the median sutures between the femorals and between the anals are sub-equal. No axillary or inguinal shields. Upper jaw with a median hook. Digits without a distinct web. Claws and limb tubercles well developed.

	mm.
Length of carapace (median line) ..	119
Greatest width of carapace ..	83
Length of plastron (median line) ..	98
Length of hind lobe of plastron ..	30
Width of hind lobe of plastron ..	53
Width of bridge .. ..	36
Depth of shell .. ..	45

The following are the colours in the living male specimen. Carapace, including the keels, uniformly black or almost dark bronze. Plastron dull yellow, with two spots on each bridge. Anterior portion of the head, including the upper and lower jaws, bright yellow with a red spot on the summit of the snout. Posterior portion of the head and also the neck brown. Iris red and a tinge of the same colour on the upper eyelid. Limbs and tail black.

*Locality*.—Near Kavalai in the Cochin State Forests, inhabiting dense forest, at an elevation of about 1500 feet above sea level.

The new species is most nearly related to *G. tricarinata*, Blyth, a terrestrial tortoise occurring in Bengal and Assam, with which it agrees in the imperfectly webbed digits and yellow plastron, but in the latter the carapace is much more convex, the three keels are yellow, the upper jaw is not hooked and there are other well-marked differences. *G. trijuga* (Schweigger) the only other member of the genus hitherto met with in India, of which I obtained the striking variety described by Anderson as var. *coronata* (Anat. Zool. Researches, Yunnan, p. 729, 1878) at Chalakudi, is an aquatic species with many points of difference. In *G. spengleri* (Gmelin) from Japan, China, Borneo and Sumatra, which agrees with the new species in its depressed carapace and hooked upper jaw, the digits are webbed and the margins of the carapace are strongly serrated.